

Task Group of the NASA Advisory Council Science Committee
Minutes
May 25, 2011

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Waleed Abdalati, Chair


T. Jens Feeley, Executive Secretary

Minutes Prepared By:
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Opening Remarks

Dr. T. Jens Feeley, Executive Secretary of the Science Committee, convened the teleconference on May 25, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. Following a roll-call, Dr. Feeley reviewed two actions from the May 4 teleconference: (1) Planetary Science Subcommittee (PSS) review of the current Analysis and Assessment Groups (AGs); and (2) application of the approach for the Lunar Exploration Analysis Group (LEAG) draft Terms of Reference to the Mars Exploration Program Assessment Group (MEPAG) and the Small Bodies Analysis Group (SBAG) Terms of Reference to incorporate the joint tasking and reporting aspects. The revised drafts were circulated to the members for review and comment in preparation for today's teleconference with the objective to work through the comments or changes.

Draft Terms of Reference Discussion

Dr. Feeley reviewed the general outline for the LEAG draft Terms of Reference including the following: the AG structure, charter, and responsibilities; appointment and roles of the LEAG Chair, members, and the Executive Secretary; delineation of multiple points of consultation; and the tasking process. He noted that the process currently outlined for appointing the Chair may need to be refined as a result of the Human Spaceflight reorganization. Dr. Michael Wargo, Exploration Systems Mission Directorate (ESMD), and NASA Headquarters (HQ) civil servant contact for the LEAG, alerted the group that there has been some discussion about the LEAG reporting to the Exploration Committee, with the LEAG Vice-Chair sitting on the PSS, rather than the LEAG reporting to both the Exploration and Science Committees with the Chair sitting on the PSS.

Dr. Wargo asked if the Terms of Reference must go through ESMD's General Counsel review, to which Dr. Feeley replied that he believed that the NASA policy directive for Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) committees requires General Counsel review of all Terms of Reference. Additionally, since the NASA Advisory Council (NAC) Charter requires the Administrator's approval of Terms of Reference documents for Analysis Groups, a "full purple package" review would be followed. This would include a cross-directorate coordination and review by several groups within the Administrator's Office prior to the Administrator's signature. Dr. Wargo explained that he mentioned this because he had worked with the Office of General Counsel (OGC) to try to identify a way that the LEAG could be tasked by ESMD for a particular analysis. The attorney from OGC could not identify a straight forward approach to doing this through a LEAG Specific Action Team, so the work had to be done by NASA civil servants. He opined that this could be a potential issue with OGC. Dr. Feeley advised that the task group will make its recommendations to the joint Exploration and Science Committees meeting in August and will take the position that this approach is of the highest value to NASA. If changes are required by the OGC, they will be dealt with at that time.

In response to a question about integration of technology approaches, Dr. Feeley explained that in theory each Mission Directorate could task the AGs to do a specific study on a technology of value, or they could task multiple AGs, who would then collaborate on the task either in formal meetings or through electronic communications. Dr. Feeley stressed that the Task Group's key objective is to extend the ability to task and/or receive information from the AGs to the ESMD. Dr. Wargo noted that ESMD is already looking at commonalities between LEAG and SBAG, and both communities understand the potential synergies. A combined annual meeting will be considered as a means for cross-community collaboration. The task definition would determine this, e.g., a request for both groups to work together on a particular topic. Starting with task definition and throughout the process, the AG Chairs would engage in ongoing discussions.

The draft LEAG and MEPAG Terms of Reference specify annual meetings; however, the draft SBAG Terms of Reference specifies semi-annual meetings. For consistency, it was decided that the SBAG semi-annual meeting reference should be changed to *annual*. It was also noted that while the role of the AG Executive Secretary is taken from language for FACA committees, even though the AGs are non-FACA organizations, it's good practice to have a NASA person as a single decision point if the AG is to provide input to NASA. The Executive Secretary fills that role as a civil servant for the AGs.

At Dr. Ronald Greely's suggestion, the phrase *if necessary* was removed from the LEAG and MEPAG drafts. He confirmed that all three AGs currently have an Executive Committee or a Steering Committee. For consistency, the word *steering* was replaced with *executive* in the SBAG Terms of Reference.

At Dr. Noel Hinners' suggestion, a reference to *Human and Robotic exploration goals* was added to the MEPAG and SBAG drafts to strengthen their charters and avoid a discontinuity among the three groups.

It was noted that the only significant difference between the MEPAG and SBAG draft Terms of Reference and the LEAG Terms of Reference exists in the area of Chair appointment responsibility. For MEPAG and SBAG, this responsibility lies with the Science Mission Directorate (SMD) Associate Administrator (AA) in consultation with the ESMD AA, whereas for the LEAG, the Chair appointment is made by the ESMD AA in consultation with the SMD and Space Operations Management Directorate (SOMD) AAs.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Feeley will circulate the revised draft recommendations to task group members for final review and comment by June 1. It was decided that since all the AG Chairs will participate in the June 22 PSS teleconference, an AG Terms of Reference discussion will be on the agenda. In preparation for this discussion, Dr. Greely will circulate a complete set of draft Terms of Reference documents to each AG Chair. The group reached consensus that it will recommend to the Exploration and Science Committees that they move forward with the amended Terms of Reference at their joint August meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m. EST.

Appendix 1 - Participants

Carolyn S. Cook	Consultant (Note Taker)
Doug Craig	NASA Headquarters
T. Jens Feeley	NASA Headquarters
Ronald Greeley	Arizona State University
James Green	NASA Headquarters
Carolyn Griner	Consultant
Noel Hinnens	Consultant
Marian Norris	NASA Headquarters
Jonathan Rall	NASA Headquarters
Michael Wargo	NASA Headquarters

Appendix 2 – Presentation Materials

1. LEAG draft Terms of Reference
2. MEPAG draft Terms of Reference
3. SBAG draft Terms of Reference